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VALEDICTORY ADDRESS

TO THE

GRADUATING CLASS OF THE MEDICAL DEPARTMENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA.

BY

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VALEDICTORY ADDRESS.

Mr. President, Ladies and Gentlemen, and Members of the Graduating Class:—We are here in obedience to a time-honored custom. Since the morning of time, the dawn of medical education, it has been the custom for medical colleges to hold what are called graduating exercises. That is, when the medical student has studied the prescribed time, and passed the necessary and satisfactory examinations, the friends of the college as well as those of the professors and students, are invited to see the graduates receive their diplomas. The custom is a pleasant and a profitable one, and one which we propose to pass on down the stream of time to our successors, as we have received it from the hands of those who have gone before us. I have said that the custom is a pleasant and a profitable one, that is, it is pleasant to the student and profitable to the teachers.

To the student it is simply a pleasing guarantee that his friends are interested in the advent of his new birth. He asks no sympathy, needs no encouragement and wants no moral support. To him "distance lends enchantment." To him

> "Golden and grand
> The hills of Fame in the dim distance rise
> All spangled o'er with triumphs, and he feels
> That he can mount them with an earnest tread,
> And wreathe a fadeless chaplet for his brow."

To him, failure has not yet been dreamt of. "He scorns the timid word;" already he sees his name so fixed on time. "That all the future cannot blot it out." To us, who are years out on our journey towards those alluring, spangled hill-tops, and have learned the narrowness and crookedness and steepness and roughness of the road, and have learned that

> "The best laid schemes o' mice and men
> Gang aft a-gley,
> An' lea'e us nought but grief and pain
> For promised joy,"

your presence and sympathy are profitable. We thank you, ladies and gentlemen, for the interest you manifest in the University of California; we thank you for the interest you manifest in the young men whom we have labored hard to render worthy of your sympathy, encouragement and support. We have done our duty by them faithfully, honestly and conscientiously. And in committing them to your care, let me remind you that the quality of the article demanded, in a large measure governs the quality of the article supplied. If you demand intelligent, high-minded, honorable and conscientious physicians, and will admit none other into your families, on behalf of the President and Medical Faculty of the University of California, I pledge you my word of honor that we will furnish you material in our graduating classes to supply your demand. If you want ignorant pretenders, advertising charlatans and that human scavenger, that social cancer of modern society, the abortionist, your demand will create the supply. And if, perchance, a graduate of medicine should fall a victim to your gold, remember that the murderer is one of your own making. We disclaim him; he is no longer of us; he has sold his birthright. But when you contemplate the atrociousness of his crime, remember that it is the social condition of the times that created him; therefore mix your righteous indignation with mercy.

It has also been customary, at the graduating exercises, for one of the Faculty, or one of the graduating class, to deliver a short valedictory address, the subject matter of which is left to his own choosing. This year that pleasing duty devolves upon me. I might occupy the time in advising the graduates as to their future; but I believe that they are leaving their lecture-rooms and their teachers with but one determination, namely, to succeed in their profession, by diligence, perseverence and integrity. Or I might address the class upon the duties and responsibilities of the profession they have chosen. I am afraid, however, I would mar their pleasures of hope, that "pledge of joy's anticipated hour," that "charm of life's bewildering way," that guide "that bids them steer to Glory's bright career," in whose "sweet garden grow wreathes for every toil, a charm for every woe." There duties are onerous, their responsibilities sacred; but I am sure from an intimate knowledge of them, that they will not neglect the one or fail to appreciate the other.

I have chosen as a subject upon which to make a few remarks, one that I hope will be as interesting to you, ladies and gentlemen, as to the graduating class. It is this: I want to say a few words to you on behalf of our little children, on behalf of the future men and women of this great republic. I want to tell you that about half of all the deaths of this city and of this country are of little children under five years of age; that of all the deaths that occur in the United States, about twenty-five per cent. are due to preventable and unnecessary causes; and should and could be prevented—making in all nearly 200,000 unnecessary deaths annually. This showing is a terrible commentary on our much-lauded scientific attainments and modern civilization. No physician can practice medicine for any length of time, without asking himself whence this terrible and unnecessary destruction of human life, this untold misery and suffering, this wail of agony extending over the whole length and breadth of our land—mothers weeping for their little ones and refusing to be comforted; their homes laid desolate, their hearts torn asunder, by an affliction they will carry with their gray hairs in sorrow to the grave—

> " Ye who say we have a child in heaven,
> Who've felt that desolate isolation sharp
> Defined in death's own face; who've stood beside
> The silent river, pleading with outstretched hands
> For some sweet babe upon the other bank,
> That went forth where no human hand might lead,
> And left the shut house with no light, no sound,
> No answer, when the mourners wail without
> What we *have known*, ye know and only you."

When he casts about for an answer, the answer is echoed from every house, every street, every school, and every pulpit. Ignorance, apathy and avarice; ignorance of anatomy and physiology; ignorance of the chemistry of digestion; ignorance of the laws of health and of hygienic and sanitary science; ignorance of the laws that govern the generation and propagation of contagious diseases; ignorance of the laws of political economy. Think of the wisdom and policy of a nation allowing thousands of children to die annually—children who might grow up with all the love of country which becomes a citizen to the manor born. And while these 200,000 unnecessary deaths occur annually, it spends money and forms societies to import foreigners, many of whom are not only ignorant of, but inimical to, its institutions. No sooner do

they land upon our shores than they attack the corner-stone of our republic and its system of education, with a seeming desire to drag the national standard of intelligence to a level with their own ignorance. Their riots and lawlessness cost more than would be required to save and raise ten times the number of educated, intelligent and law-abiding citizens. I do not advocate a protective tariff on the manufacture of our own citizens. I believe that every man has the right to select the climate or country that suits his fancy; but I do maintain that if it costs a nation less to raise a better article than to import a poorer one, it is good policy to raise the better article. How shall we account for this ignorance and apathy on these important and vital subjects? We answer, false notions of what constitutes education, the diffusion of superstition for knowledge, and the desire to accumulate wealth, even at the sacrifice of life and health.

What are many of the best universities in our land doing? Requiring a young man to spend the spring-time of his life in learning to translate a few pages of Greek and Latin; teaching him that the knowledge of the construction of a Latin sentence is of more importance than a knowledge of the construction of his own body. Sending him out into the world without the knowledge of self-preservation, where he falls a victim to acquired or preventable diseases long ere the spring-time of his life reaches summer. And see our young women, spending the morning of their lives in what? In fitting themselves for the duties that sooner or later must devolve upon them? Are they obtaining knowledge that will enable them to preserve their own health and save their offspring from misery, disease and death? They never hear the word offspring from their teachers. They do hear, however, much about the necessary preparations required for one of the learned professions and universal suffrage. Or, perhaps, they are destroying their health and laying the foundation of disease in the acquisition of accomplishments, while they are left to commence the care of their child as ignorant of its physical and moral nature as the child itself. I know all about it. I have seen the poor, helpless mother grappling with the new problem a hundred times, and a hundred times I have seen the experiment end in disaster and death; in the death of, to her, the most beautiful rosebud that ever blossomed in the garden of the world; and in filling her own heart with a cup of sorrow that will retain its freshness for many and many a coming year.

Do not suppose that I am opposed to the higher branches of education, or the acquisition of accomplishments and esthetic culture. I hope I can at least appreciate the benefits of the one and the beauties, pleasures and graces of the other. But I do claim that we should teach the essentials first; that we should possess the necessary knowledge to preserve our health and contend intelligently against the invasion of our homes by those insidious, terrible and death-dealing enemies, the acquired and contagious diseases. I am glad to see that the University of California is teaching anatomy and physiology in its collegiate course; and I hope it will not be long before some of our wealthy men will endow a chair for the teaching of sanitary science and the prevention of contagious diseases. This would be an important step in the right direction, and one that would soon make its influence felt on our coast by saving hundreds of lives and untold misery.

We are not likely soon to forget the last year, when that destroying angel, yellow fever, held high carnival in our Southern States, when the groans of the dying and the wails of the living pierced every ear, from the Gulf of Mexico to Maine, and from the Atlantic to the Pacific. To set sentiment aside, not to speak of the widespread mortality and suffering, it cost the nation some $27,000,000. Incredible as it may seem, that reeking cesspool of corruption, that death-generating slough of pollution at Memphis, has been allowed to remain undisturbed, and the necessary atmospheric conditions may give us another carnival of death. Probably, if a few thousands of the $27,000,000 had been spent in teaching a better knowledge of contagious diseases, it might have awakened the survivors of Memphis to a realization of the sanitary condition of their city, and have proved an excellent investment.

Let us look at our own city. How many of the annual deaths can be prevented by proper sanitary regulations, and a better understanding of the physical and moral training of children! How important would be the appointment of a competent sanitary engineer to inspect the erection of all new buildings and insure their proper hygienic condition, thus protecting the inmates against the rascality of plumbers and the avarice of landlords! We should have our sewers properly built, well-ventilated and an inexpensive method of flushing them out with salt water frequently during the summer months. In cases of scarlet fever,

how easy a matter for the Board of Health to have a card placed upon the house where the disease exists, as in the case of small-pox; with a few simple regulations in regard to the care of the child before it shall be allowed to mingle with other children or admitted into the schools. How vast would be the results in the saving of expense, suffering and life.

Let me invite your attention to the dwellings of the poor. The man of all men living who commands my sympathy is the poor, honest laborer who strives to give his children a better education than his own has been, and to make them honorable and useful members of society, but who is compelled from circumstances to rear them in crowded, filthy alleys, where the very air they breathe is reeking with physical and moral death. Such families, and their number is legion, should have a rapid and cheap transportation to our beautiful and healthy side-hills, where they would have a better opportunity to rear their children to fill positions of honor and trust, rather than to raise them to fill our prisons and houses of correction. Let me say that I hope you will all interest yourselves in that noble work that has already been commenced, namely, the free kindergarten schools. Leaving sentiment out of the question, it will cost less to gather up these little waifs and save them from disease and crime, than to subsequently provide them with hospitals, and to convict and punish them when they have been added to our criminal element.

Let us inquire what our brethren the clergymen are doing to prevent this wholesale destruction of children. Are they using their vast influence to assist us in popularizing sound knowledge in regard to preventable diseases? I am sorry to say they are not. Too often they to assuage the mother's grief, attribute the death of the child to supernatural causes and to divine purposes, when the death was one that should have been and could have been prevented. The words are spoken in kindness, but a few remarks on the unfortunate causes of the death might be the means of saving hundreds of other children. To ascribe all deaths as necessary to fill a divine purpose would do for a hundred years ago, when the lightning's flash, the peal of thunder, the roar of the cataract, or an epidemic of contagious disease, was accepted as evidence of an offended deity; but it will not do for 1879. We hope the time is not far distant when the schools of divinity will require for their students instruction in sanitary science.

It is not enough, then, for us to acquire the necessary knowledge to protect ourselves and our own children from disease; we must also provide for the children who are left without protection and without care. Let me quote

A MOTHER'S PLEA FOR THE INFANTS' HOME.

Pity, help the little children
 Who enjoy no father's care,
And o'er whom a tender mother
 Never breathes a loving prayer.

Who will hear them, who will heed them,
 As they perish one by one,
In this world of joy and beauty—
 Underneath the blessed sun?

See! they perish near God's temples,
 Where a loving Saviour stands
Bidding all to help in mercy—
 Will you heed the Lord's commands?

Hear the wailing of the children—
 O, it breaks my very heart
When I see that in your city
 Women do the murderer's part!

Ears as deaf and dull as adder's
 Catch the babies' famished cries;
Eyes as pitiless as Herod's
 Watch their dying agonies.

Blood is on thy skirts, O city!
 Blood of many a little one!
God in judgment will require it—
 He will make His justice known.

Are they sinful little children?
 Outcasts to be flung aside—
Trodden underfoot or tortured—
 Victims of our greed or pride?

Sleep, yes sleep, in peace, O mothers,
 With your darlings safe in bed;
Do not dream of those poor infants,
 Outcasts, starving, dying—dead.

Let not their pinched faces haunt you,
 Nor their forms all bruised and scarred—
Why your happiness and comfort
 By such visions grim be marred?

What to you are starving infants,
If your own are amply fed?
What to you are pain and torture
Falling on another's head?

Mothers, sisters (in whose bosom
God's great love has found a place),
Hasten to the rescue—hasten
As ye prize the Saviour grace.

Rich men, help us in your bounty,
Give us freely of your store;
Fruit you'll find most richly, surely,
When your gold avails no more.

Again, ladies and gentlemen, I thank you for your sympathy and presence.

And now, gentlemen of the graduating class, on behalf of the President of the University of California, and on behalf of my coadjutors, your teachers, I bid you good-bye as medical students, and extend to you the right hand of fellowship, welcoming you into the ranks of professional life—into the ranks of a profession which has ever been foremost in the practice of those virtues which the other professions teach; a profession whose whole lifetime is one of unceasing duties and sacred trusts. May the duties and the obligations confided to your care be performed with intelligence, with courage, with honor, and in kindness. In whatsoever community you may cast your lot, may that community be the wiser and the better for your influence. Never miss an opportunity to encourage sound education or to instruct the people in the laws that govern the generation and propagation of contagious diseases. And, above all things, be kind and considerate to the poor and to the outcasts of society. Theirs is a hard lot. They seldom fail to appreciate your kindness, and too often the doctor is the only one to whom they can turn for sympathy. And, gentlemen, when life's battle is ended, and you have crossed that mysterious sea that divides the two eternities, and have landed on the shores of the "sweet bye-and bye," may the herald of that shining land welcome you home. May the herald of that shining land announce your arrival as of men who never wavered from the right, as of men who stood in proud pre-eminence, high over all, in their sympathy, in their humanity and in their charity for their fellow-men.